In the claims

1. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a call waiting priority alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating a plurality of priority codes with a telephone number of the telephone line, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is further associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels, each of the plurality of priority levels represents a degree of urgency and is associated with a priority alert signal that identifies the degree of urgency for the subscriber;

providing multiple priority codes to a calling party prior to a call being placed by the calling party to enable the calling party to choose a level of urgency for a call to the subscriber;

receiving the call from the calling party who dialed the telephone number while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving one of the priority codes from the calling party during the call to the subscriber to allow the calling party to identify the level of urgency for the call;

sending to ~~playing for~~ the same telephone number dialed by the calling party a priority alert signal associated with the priority code provided by the calling party ~~and~~ that is indicative of the level of urgency of the call to interfere with the first communication session and alert the subscriber to the level of urgency of the call; and

establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

2. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the priority code provided by the calling party is unique to the calling party.

3. (Cancelled)

4. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein one of the priority alert signals associated with one of the priority codes provided by the calling party is a regular call waiting tone.

5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising playing an announcement for the calling party if the calling party does not provide any priority code.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising playing an announcement for the calling party if the priority code provided by the calling party does not match any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number.

7. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a priority call waiting services to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating a telephone number of the telephone line with a plurality of priority codes, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number represents a different priority level that is representative of a degree of urgency of a call;

assigning a priority alert signal to each of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number such that the priority alert signal of each of the plurality of priority codes identifies the degree of urgency for the subscriber;

providing multiple priority codes to a calling party prior to a call being placed by the calling party to enable the calling party to choose a level of urgency for a call to the subscriber;

receiving the call from the calling party dialing the telephone number while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving one of the priority codes from the calling party during the call to the subscriber to allow the calling party to identify the level of urgency for the call;

determining whether the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number;

sending to ~~playing for~~ the same telephone number dialed by the calling party a priority alert signal assigned to the priority code provided by the calling party that is indicative of the level of urgency of the call to alert the subscriber to the level of urgency

of the call from the calling party if the priority code provided by the calling party matches one of the plurality of priority codes associated with the telephone number; and

establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

8. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein each priority alert signal assigned to each of the plurality of priority codes is unique to the calling party.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 7, wherein a second calling party is provided by the subscriber with more priority codes associated with the telephone number than is provided to the calling party.

10. (Cancelled)

11. (Previously Presented) A system for providing a priority call waiting alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the system comprising:

a switch in communication with the telephone line, wherein the switch is configured to detect incoming calls intended for the subscriber when the subscriber is already engaged in a first communication session with a third party, and

a processor in communication with the switch, wherein the processor is configured to review a subscriber list containing information associated with the subscriber, wherein the information associated with the subscriber is modifiable at any time by the subscriber via a computer network,

wherein when the switch detects an incoming call intended for the subscriber from a calling party using a telephone number associated with the telephone line while the subscriber is already engaged in the first communication session with the third party, the switch launches a query comprising a subscriber number of the subscriber,

wherein when the processor receives the query, the processor instructs the switch to solicit a priority code that represents a degree of urgency from the calling party without interfering with the first communication session,

wherein the processor verifies that the priority code supplied by the calling party is contained in the subscriber list,

wherein multiple priority codes representing multiple degrees of urgency were previously provided to the calling party by the subscriber prior to the call to enable the calling party to choose a level of urgency for the call to the subscriber,

wherein the processor instructs the switch to interrupt the first communication session with a priority alert signal for the same telephone number used by the calling party if the priority code provided by the calling party is recognized by the processor to be one of a plurality of priority codes previously associated with the telephone number, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is further associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels that represents the degrees of urgency, each of the plurality of priority levels is associated with a priority alert signal that identifies the degree of urgency for the subscriber,

wherein the switch then suspends the first communication session, and establishes a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

12. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the switch is provisioned with a trigger.

13. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11, wherein the trigger is a service switching point and the processor is a service control point.

14. (Previously Presented) The system of claim 11, wherein one of the priority alert signals is a regular call waiting tone.

15. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a call waiting priority alert service to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating two or more priority codes with a telephone number of the telephone line in a database accessible by a controller, wherein each of the two or more priority codes is associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels that represents a

degree of urgency, each of the plurality of priority levels is associated with a priority alert signal that identifies the degree of urgency for the subscriber;

providing multiple priority codes to a calling party prior to a call being placed by the calling party to enable the calling party to choose a level of urgency for a call to the subscriber;

receiving the call from the calling party while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party;

receiving via the switch one of the priority codes from the calling party during the call to the subscriber to allow the calling party to identify the level of urgency for the call;

determining at the controller whether the priority code from the calling party matches a priority code of the database;

when the priority code matches, determining at the controller the priority alert signal for the priority code;

sending an instruction to the switch to ~~play~~ send the priority alert signal to the same telephone number dialed by the calling party, wherein a control field of the instruction specifies the priority alert signal to play; and

playing by the switch and for the same telephone number dialed by the calling party the priority alert signal specified by the controller of the call to interfere with the first communication session between the subscriber and the third party and to alert the subscriber to the level of urgency of the call.

16. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, further comprising establishing a second communication session between the calling party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.

17. (Cancelled)

18. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, wherein the priority code provided by the calling party is unique to the calling party.

19. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 15, further comprising determining whether the priority code provided by the calling party matches any of the two or more priority codes associated with the telephone number.

20. (Currently Amended) A method for providing a priority call waiting services to a subscriber of a telephone line, the method comprising the steps of:

associating a telephone number of the telephone line with a plurality of priority codes, wherein each of the plurality of priority codes is further associated with a priority level of a plurality of priority levels that represent a degree of urgency;

assigning a priority alert signal to each of the plurality of priority codes to thereby identify the degree of urgency for the subscriber by the priority alert signal;

providing multiple priority codes to a ~~calling~~ second party prior to a call from the ~~calling~~ party to the subscriber to enable the ~~calling~~ second party to choose a level of urgency for a ~~call~~ second communication to the subscriber;

receiving the ~~call~~ second communication from the ~~calling~~ second party while the telephone line is engaged in a first communication session between the subscriber and a third party, wherein the second communication is sent from at least one of a telephone, an interactive pager, a computer and a personal digital assistant;

receiving one of the priority codes from the ~~calling~~ second party during the call to the subscriber to allow the ~~calling~~ second party to identify the level of urgency for the call; and

sending to ~~playing for~~ the telephone number a priority alert signal assigned to the priority code provided by the calling party and indicative of the level of urgency of the call to alert the subscriber to the level of urgency of the call.

21. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20, wherein the priority code provided by the ~~calling~~ second party is unique to the ~~calling~~ second party.

22. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 20, wherein an ~~second~~ additional calling party is provided by the subscriber with more priority codes associated with the telephone number than is provided to the ~~calling~~ second party.

23. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 22, further comprising establishing a second communication session between the ~~calling~~ party and the subscriber if the subscriber chooses to suspend the first communication session.